I CLAIM

1.   A signal format comprising a Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises:

5   a Label having a predetermined number of bytes, and including at least one byte identifying the Item;

a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item; and

the data of the Item.

10   2.   A signal format for use in a system which transfers data to and/or from an SDTI system, the signal format comprising a SDTI Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises: a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item; and the data of the Item;

15   each Item being modified in that a Label having a predetermined number of bytes and identifying the Item replaces the Start Code of the Item and the End Code of the Item is removed.

3.   A signal format according to claim 1, wherein the Label has a fixed

20   number of bytes having preassigned values and at least one byte of variable value for identifying an item.

4.   A signal format according to claim 2, wherein the said data of the or each Item comprises one or more Element data blocks, the or each Item also having an

25   Item header, preceding the element data block, and indicating the number of element data blocks in the Item.

5.   A signal format according to claim 4, wherein each Element data block comprises:

at least one word indicating the number of words in the Element, and if greater than zero, at least one word defining the type of element and at least one word indicating the number of the Element, and the data of the Element.

5   6.   A signal format according to claim 2, wherein the data of the System Item includes metadata relating to the or each of the Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items in the Content Package.

7.   A signal format according to claim 6, wherein the said metadata

10   includes link metadata which links metadata relating to an Element to the Element to which it relates.

8.   A signal format according to claim 2, wherein the Label has a predetermined fixed format except for the said byte identifying the Item.

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9.   A file for storage in a computer system, the file comprising a concatenation of one or more Content Packages as defined in claim 2.

10.   A file according to claim 9, comprising a concatenation of a plurality of

20   Content Packages, each Content Package including one video frame.

11.   A file according to claim 10, wherein the frames are compressed video frames.

25   12.   A method of producing a signal, comprising

forming a Content Package by concatenating at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item,

the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items being formed by concatenating:

a.Label having a predetermined number of bytes and including at least one byte identifying the Item;

a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item; and

the data of the Item.

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13.   A method of forming a signal comprising the steps of:

receiving an SDTI signal comprising an SDTI Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises a

10   start code, a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item, the data of the Item and an end code;

removing the start and end codes identifying the Item type; and:

inserting a Label in place of the start code, the label having a predetermined number of bytes and at least one byte identifying the Item.

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14.   A method of forming a signal according to claim 13, wherein the Label has a predetermined fixed format except for the said byte identifying the Item.

15.   A method of forming a file for storage in a computer system,

20   comprising concatenating one or more Content Packages as defined in claim 2. 12

16.   A method of forming a file for storage in a computer system, comprising concatenating a plurality of Content Packages, each Content Package being formed by the method of claim 13.

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17.   A method according to claim 16, wherein each Content Package includes one video frame.

18.   A method according to claim 17 wherein the frames are compressed video frames.

19.   A method of transferring video data within a computer network, comprising: forming a file containing the video data by the method of claim 17; and transferring the file.

20.   Apparatus for forming a content package comprising

an input for receiving an SDTI signal comprising an SDTI Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises a start code, a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item, the data of the Item and an end code; and

a format converter for removing the start and end codes; and for inserting a Label in place of the start code, the Label having a predetermined number of bytes and at least one byte identifying the Item.

21.   Apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising a signal source for producing the SDTI signal.

22.   Apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising a buffer for storing the SDTI signal and providing it to the said removing and inserting means.

23.   Apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising a computer system having a store for storing files, the said format converter being an interface between the said signal source for producing the SDTI signal and the computer system.

24.   Apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the computer system comprises a network of file stores linked by a file transfer system.

25.   A method of forming a signal comprising the steps of:

receiving an signal comprising a Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises a Label having a predetermined number of bytes and at least one byte identifying the Item a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item, and the data of the Item; removing the Label of each Item; inserting a start code and Item type word in place of the Label; and inserting an end code to thereby produce an SDTI signal.

26.   A format converter comprising:

an input for receiving an SDTI signal comprising an SDTI Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises a start code, a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item, the data of the Item and an end code; and

means for removing the start and end codes; and the Item type word and for inserting a Label in place of the start code, the Label having a predetermined number of bytes and at least one byte identifying the Item.

27.   A format converter according to claim 26, wherein the said means comprises a multiplexer having first and second inputs and an output, a first store for storing the Label coupled to the first input, a second store for storing the SDTI signal, and a controller for reading the Label out of the first store for supply to the first input followed by reading the word count and the data out of the second store for supply to the second input

28.   A format converter comprising:

an input for receiving a signal comprising a Content Package having at least a System Item and one or more of a Picture Item, an Audio Item and an Auxiliary Item, wherein the or each of the System, Picture, Audio and Auxiliary Items comprises a,

Label having a predetermined number of bytes and at least one byte identifying the Item a word count indicating the number of bytes of data of the Item, and the data of the Item; and

5   means for removing the Label of each Item, and for inserting a start code and Item type word in place of the Label, and for inserting an end code, to thereby produce an SDTI signal.

10   29.   A format converter according to claim 28, wherein the said means comprises a multiplexer having first second and third inputs and an output, a first store for storing the start code coupled to the first input, a second store for storing an Item and coupled to the second input and a third store for storing the end code and coupled to the third input, and a controller for reading the start code out of the first store for supply to the first input, followed by reading the Item type word, the word count and the data out of the second store for supply to the second input and followed by reading

15   the end code out of the third store for supply to the third input, to thereby produce the SDTI signal.